



Ex-CBI Roundup

— CHINA — BURMA — INDIA —

MARCH
1968





INFORMATION PLEASE! We have in our files a number of good pictures that are not identified, and we would appreciate the help of our readers. This blushing blonde, of course, is Venus . . . but where was she located in CBI during World War II. Julius Rosenfeld sent us the picture . . . who can identify it?

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EX-CBI ROUNDUP

CHINA • BURMA • INDIA

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Ex-CBI ROUNDUP, established 1946, is a reminiscing magazine published monthly except AUGUST and SEPTEMBER at 117 South Third Street, Laurens, Iowa, by and for former members of U. S. Units stationed in the China-Burma-India Theater during World War II. Ex-CBI Roundup is the official publication of the China-Burma-India Veterans Association.

Neil L. Maurer Editor

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Letter FROM The Editor . . .

● **New Delhi, India**, has what is believed to be the largest group of cyclists in the world—525,000—and rising at the rate of 20,000 a year. It is claimed that every cyclist pedals an average of 21 miles a day. You can imagine how dangerous it is to venture out on New Delhi streets during the rush hours—from 9 to 11 in the morning and from 5 to 6 in the afternoon. Winter is the most dangerous time—the heat of the summer makes people much too tired even to run over each other.

● **Cover photo** shows ferries and footbridges such as were used by the Japanese in their retreat toward Liuchow, China. This U.S. Air Force photo may bring back memories to CBIers who served in that particular area.

● **Each reunion** of CBI veterans locates a few more CBIers who have never heard of the organization. With the 1968 reunion set for Des Moines, several have already been located in Iowa due to what publicity there has been. And we're still finding some who didn't know about Ex-CBI Roundup, after all these years. Perhaps some of your friends may be among them . . . we suggest you mention both CBIVA and Roundup.

● **We're happy** to locate well-written histories or articles about CBI units. Perhaps you could write one about your own outfit. Why not try it?

● **Keep us informed** if you're planning to move. Otherwise you may end up on our list of people who cannot be located.



Thomas J. Hoover

● Thomas J. Hoover, 52, of Ottumwa, Iowa, who was a sergeant in the 1326th AAF-BU in India and Burma during World War II, was killed instantly February 12, 1968, when the truck in which he was riding hit an overpass abutment near Marseilles, Ill. He was employed as a driver for the United Buckingham Freight Lines in Des Moines and was on a trip from Des Moines to Fort Wayne, Ind. He was asleep in the sleeper cab at the time of the accident. Survivors include his wife, Catherine; one son, one stepson, one stepdaughter, six grandchildren, his mother, one brother and six sisters.

(From a newspaper clipping submitted by Charles Bloom, Ottumwa, Iowa.)



SNAKE charmer on a Calcutta street in February 1945. Photo by C. Jacobson.

MARCH, 1968



HORSE RACE under way at Calcutta, India. You're right, the nags are running the wrong way—but that's the way they did it. Photo by J. L. Rosenfeld.

7th Bomb Group

● Since receiving the back copies of Ex-CBI Roundup, I have found names of individuals we do not have on our 7th Bomb Group roster. I found the name of Ray Lent of Houston, Texas, in the January 1968 issue and wonder if he wasn't an aircrew member from the 436th Squadron. If any subscribers were members of the 7th Bomb Group (H), we would appreciate hearing from them and having their names entered on our permanent roster for future notices of reunions of this World War II outfit. I'm wondering, also, if there is a basha in Washington State. Information would be appreciated.

RICHARD E. YOUNG,
19015 168th N.E.,
Woodinville, Wash.

E. R. Merchant

● Am sorry to inform you that my husband, E. R. Merchant, died November 20, 1967, of lung cancer. He always enjoyed Ex-CBI Roundup and looked forward to its arrival. We have most of the back issues that he received.

MRS. E. R. MERCHANT,
Vernon, Ala.

Dr. Burleigh Kammerer

● Memorial services for Dr. Burleigh Kammerer, prominent East Bay psychiatrist, were held March 2, 1968, in Berkeley, Calif.

He was a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, and the St. Louis School of Medicine. During World War II he served for four years in India after attending the Army's Medical Administrative Corps Training School in Texas in 1942. Survivors include his wife, four sons, a daughter and three sisters.

(From a newspaper clipping sent in by Ray Kirkpatrick, San Francisco, Calif.)

Hand-Built Highway

● The article on "The Hand-Built Highway" in your October issue was particularly interesting to me for the 45th General Service Engineer Regiment that I commanded from November 1943 to about the end of the War, built and worked on a good many of those 478 miles between Ledo and Wanting. After reading it, the thought came to me that a brief history of the outfits that worked on the Ledo Road might be good copy for your magazine.

R. SELEE
Col., USA, Ret.,
Balboa, C.Z.



BASKET weavers have their own manufacturing plant on the street in Delhi, India. Photo by Stan Paszkewicz.

159th Station Hospital

● A one-day meeting of the 159th Station Hospital Group, Malir, and families will be held Sunday, July 7, 1968, at Kenton, Ohio. Any further information may be obtained from George Runser, 219 Jennings Street, Kenton, Ohio 43326. We're hoping to see many of the old gang there.

ELEANOR HARRIS,
Muskogee, Okla.



INTERESTING VIEW of the gardens surrounding the Jain Temple in Calcutta, India. Photo by J. L. Rosenfeld.

Trip to Far East

● Members of the 14th Air Force Association, for their 25th anniversary reunion this year, will go back to the Far East for a convention in Taipei. They will also visit Japan and Hong Kong. The tour will leave July 27 from Seattle, Wash., via Northwest Orient Airlines. A large number of members of the association and their wives have signed up for the tour. A full schedule has been arranged for the visit to Taiwan.

(From a letter sent to members of the 14th Air Force Association.)

Early Arrival

● Was reading Gordon Gammack's column in the Des Moines Register and saw where the CBI Veterans Association is to have a reunion in Des Moines in August. I would like to attend. I was one of the first to go to India, although the A.V.G. (Flying Tigers) were there before we arrived. I was on the USS Brazil and we landed in Karachi; were first stationed out on the desert at New Malir and then up at Agra. This was in 1942. I was in Hq. & Hq.

home base in Agra. The ATC was formed from the Ferry Command and we took over the supply and overhaul. Was in India 34 months, then flew out of Liberal, Kans., on B-24s until discharge. Have an old CBI buddy, Paul McComb of New Market, Iowa, who is in charge of the National Guard Armory at Clarinda, Iowa.

M. J. WINSON,
Mapleton, Iowa

On Burma Road

● Yesterday I read in the paper where the national reunion of the China-Burma-India Veterans Association is to be held in Des Moines in August. I was over on the Burma Road in 1944 and 1945 and would like to have more information as I would like to attend this year and maybe meet some of my old buddies.

OSCAR W. LENTZKOW,
Independence, Iowa



BASHA near the Stilwell Road, typical of native construction. Photo by James Latta, Jr.

The Story of a Company

This is the story of a CBI outfit, the 893rd Signal Company, Depot Aviation. It was written at the end of World War II, when the big job was finished but the company had not yet returned to the States. Its authors were men of the outfit . . . it was made available to Ex-CBI Roundup by R. C. "Dick" Collins of Gardena, Calif.

Since the full narrative would require volumes, only some of the highlights were included. As the unidentified authors pointed out, it is the story of "a small cog in a great machine of war, wherein we did our part as we were ordered, thus helping to gain final victory."

COMPANY HISTORY

My name is the 893rd Signal Company Depot Aviation. Impressive, isn't it? My father was the Army Air Forces . . . my mother the Air Service Command. I guess I was conceived some rainy night in Sacramento. I was born in Reno, Nevada, February 1st, 1943. I nursed on basic training, weaned on specialized schooling, teetted on bivouac. Mom and Dad were pretty busy in '43. They let me alone . . . but I'm getting ahead of my story.

I grew fast . . . shot out of the ground of paper work like a bean stalk. I even kept a diary . . . still do; call it a morning report. I was a healthy kid, awkward and gangly and brash and a demon around the house but shy in the company of strangers.

And mixed up, too. I got the blood of shipping clerks, the bone of farm hands—sinews, muscles, ligament from students, salesmen, shipfitters . . .

I don't suppose I have a nationality. Russian, Polish, Magyar, Irish, Scotch and Scandinavian . . . Jew, Italian, Spanish (what's the nationality of a tree?). Religion? Sure. I'm Catholic, Protestant, Jewish . . . Episcopalian, Baptist, Methodist, Christian Scientist, Seven Day Adventist, Atheist, Agnostic. (What's the religion of an Army cemetery?) And where do I come from? New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania . . . Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Washington . . . (Where does a river come from? . . . tell me each mountain stream, each brooklet from each hill, each well from every forest and I will tell you where I come from.

An average bunch of guys made me. They had everything they wanted and

never knew it. They believed that four out of five offended, that their toothbrushes were pink . . . that ponds made them lovely and engaged. They knew that crispy crunchy cereals gave them vim and vigor and vitality. Spelled serutan backwards and took milk of magnesia. Measured cigarettes and bought six loose ones for a nickle. I guess I got complexion, I guess I got some character.

I spent my childhood in Reno, Nevada . . . lived at a place called the Army Air Base. Never did much as a kid . . . exercised at close order drill and hated it, went to school for a while but I never liked kindergarten. I went out with girls sometimes . . . Mom and Dad were broadminded as long as I didn't get into too much trouble. But then on June 27th, 1943, they decided I was getting big for my age and it was time for school. And so I went to school. I always listened to Mom and Dad . . . ever try arguing with the Army Air Forces . . . it doesn't work.

The Signal Training Center, AAFTTC, Fairgrounds, Fresno, California, was the seat of learning. But I was pretty smart. After all, part of me was teletyped—trained at Camp Crowder, Missouri, and I had gone to radio repair school at Ft. Monmouth, N.J., radar school at Camp Murphy, Fla., code school at Omaha, Nebr. I could drive a truck and type and file . . . string a telephone line, operate a message center. I could even cook! I could repair anything with tubes, condensers and resistors. Fix a dynamotor, a power unit, package and store a thousand kinds of supply and in all that time, I was still growing. I was almost 216 men old.

I left Fresno and proceeded to Badger Pass, California; stayed there from the 12th of July to the 3rd of August. A month in the mountains . . . a summer vacation. The excitement of anticipation, the frantic packing and the last minute arrangements. School was over. The summer was a favorite dessert. I ate away the days, reveling each sensation of taste and sorrowing as I narrowed down my pleased food. (Did you ever stretch your legs on a mountain side?) I did. I slept in a pup tent and ate out of a mess kit. Washed in a helmet and hid in the camouflage brush. I would come back some day to the tall trees, the cold daybreaks, blanketing stars which I could never touch but always feel. But there was a job in Texas. I had

been conceived, born and bred . . . schooled and trained. From Fresno again by troop train, August 24th to arrive at Kelly Field, Texas, August 27th, 1943.

Kelly Field was my high school and my first job. I worked, put my textbook lessons to the test and passed the examinations. Dad would send an inspector general down to see me, and I would scrub and polish myself, get my teeth fixed up, my shot records put in order, my clothing salvaged. They must have looked me over four times a week. And I would play . . . have a party at the Knights of Columbus, the mess hall, find my respite on the lonely streets of a Texas town. But I was restless, eager to go into the world. There was a bigger job waiting for me and I knew it. I was hot to find my place.

I traveled again. I pulled my 216 parts together, gathered myself onto a train and shipped my way eastward. I left Texas December 11th. I arrived at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia, on December 14th, 1943.

I did plenty of thinking on that train. Before that I was too young to think and be afraid. After that it would make no difference. I slept on that train; two parts of me in a lower bunk, another in the top. I ate, washed, played my games to pass the hours and days. I watched a hillside slip away from me, that hillside was my past . . . something still there but something to which I could not go back.

It was cold in Virginia in the December of 1943. I lived in prefabricated hutments, huddled myself for warmth over the coal-stoves of the barracks. I drilled, showed myself in daily displays, ate and rested myself, and waited. The waiting was bad. The silence, the secrecy, the confinement were unhealthy and I suffered the disease and discomfort of rumor. Christmas came, I spent Christmas Eve in one barrack. I had beer and I sang Christmas carols and I was unhappy. I don't suppose I ever felt sorrier for myself than that one Christmas Eve in 1943.

There were two oceans and two seas between my biggest job and this, my last temporary home in the States. I boarded ship on New Year's Eve. Eleven months from the day of my birth, I sailed away. The ship: H.M.T. Andes.

I docked at Casablanca, Africa, on January 9th, 1944. I had left the enclosing security of American shores to come to this strange country, Africa. I had traded skyscrapers for thatched mud huts, concrete highways for dirt roads, the corner drugstore for the smoky foreign bars. I saw begging kids, the mucus running from their noses. I saw the desert-garbed shepherds herding their flocks of

mangy sheep. I bargained with the shred town merchants and lost on every transaction. And there was guard duty in the black night with the shrill of jackals adding to the festering of my fear.

The train that took me to Oran they called a Forty and Eight. I was 33 to a car with barracks bag and pack, with carbine, helmet, gas mask . . . a swaying lister bag . . . I ate "C" rations and cursed; grew cold at night and cursed; fatigued with cramped muscles and cursed. And I left a trail across the plains and mountains of North Africa; a path of empty cans and cigarette butts.

I boarded the H.M.T. Chantilly on January 31st. I was routed through to Bombay, India. The ship hugged the African coast line, passed through the Suez Canal, Port Said, Aden . . . the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean and India, March 4th, 1944. I reached Kanchrapara staging area on March 9th.

But still the great big wait. I could measure my time in impersonal dates, trace each step of journey. With cold statistical accuracy, I could draw up a balance sheet of my assets and liabilities. But I was without function, without purpose. The trained technical mechanism of my person grew rusty.

But Mother and Dad had not forgotten. The Army Air Forces consisted of the Tenth Air Force in India, the Fourteenth Air Force in China, and part of the gigantic 20th Bomber Command. The Air Transport Command was shuttling supplies by the ton over the hump to China. The Eastern Air Command was blasting the enemy from the skies over Northern Burma. Supplies were being dropped by air to my cousins, the infantry. And Mother was busy too. Engine overhaul, air corps and signal and ordnance supply, radio repair and a spider web of telephone and teletype lines crossed the continent. Where did I fit into this gigantic scheme? (Where does one person, one company fit into the pattern of an army?)

I reported for duty to the 5317th Air Depot (Provisional) APO 492, on May 10th, 1944. I had a job to do in India. It is done.

A child is born, adolescent is schooled, a man does his work he must do . . . and dies. But there will be no finality to my death. I will be the sunset in the Red Sea, the bleak night on the deck on a New Year's Eve, the night bombing in the Mediterranean. I will be the beer parties on the barrack porch, the poker game in the day room, the 5 anna deposit on a Coke bottle. I will be the ball game in the cow-paddied field in India, the train accident in the station

in Africa, the movie in the hollowed gorge. The sudden shock of vaccine, the Saturday inspections. I will be a memory.

HEADQUARTERS

Early in February, 1943, the first men arrived to join the newly activated 893rd Signal Company. The work of the Headquarters Platoon started at that instance; it has continued every day from that time. The motto of the men who work in headquarters well could be "The work is never done." For it is the men of company headquarters who make out all reports on company activity and personnel, who see that the men are fed, that clothing and equipment is available for those assigned and attached to the unit.

The work has not changed much since February 1943. The cooks still prepare three meals a day. The company clerk today has the same questions about the morning report to answer as he did back years ago. The supply sergeant told a man yesterday for the ten thousandth time that salvage would be taken on Fridays. The first sergeant all the while has been posting notices on the bulletin board, giving detailed information, directing men to report. The mail orderly continues to take the mail to the post office, and to bring back less than the men think they should have. The duty NCO has been chasing the sweepers for eighteen months through the same daily routine; the Saturday morning inspection remains his biggest problem. Since the first payroll was typed and signed, the same job has been repeated for every month that followed.

The men of Headquarters perform a service function for the other men of the company. Their contribution to war has been through their work to help and service the men who work in supply, repair, or operations. When they make a mistake, the men usually know, for the error affects them directly. If you ship the wrong item from signal supply, the man working next to you never feels the mistake. If you blotch a meal as a cook, the whole company informs you of the matter with more or less politeness. Woe beside the mess sergeant who makes the wrong estimate and leaves the last men in the chow line short a choice item on the menu. You don't make friends in the supply room when you lose a man's laundry; love is not engendered when a man is put to detail before his time.

Despite the routine nature of headquarters work, in each phase of company life there was a definite emphasis on different problems. While the unit was stationed at Reno, the primary concern of the unit was the screening of men

passing through the company, striving to select the proper men to fill each T/O slot. With the aid of section officers, this job was accomplished. The completed job required enough paper to fill a small warehouse. At the same time the unit was undergoing training, preparing for overseas movement. More reports were required.

After the unit was removed from the alerted list, the company moved to Fresno and the bivouac at Badger Pass. Two problems confronted the men there. First the planning, organization, and operation of a complete basic training schedule. Second, the messing and administrating for the men under field conditions. There is a difference between taking care of a unit stationed at a well equipped base and when the unit is on its own. The training the company overhead received while at Badger Pass proved useful during the future moves of the company which carried it halfway around the world.

When the headquarters moved to Kelly Field, the emphasis shifted again. This time the main consideration was the readiness of the company for overseas movement. All of us will remember the showdown inspections, the trips to the supply room to exchange clothing and to draw additional equipment. Records were checked and rechecked in the orderly room. Inspection of company records became routine. All the time there was a volume of correspondence to be answered concerning the condition and training of the unit. Finally there were the plans and the resulting action to take the unit from the field to the staging area at Camp Patrick Henry.

At Bengal Air Depot the company at last settled down to the work for which it had been trained. In addition to its ordinary duties, the headquarters of the company was given the responsibility of keeping record of the men working in the different sections of signal, to shift men from one section to the other as the work required, to change the jobs to which the men were assigned until each man was working in a position where he could be of maximum usefulness in light of the work requirements. This latter job was not completed until early in 1945 when the last of the repairmen were moved from supply and put to work with their first love, repair. During this period the orderly room kept a constant stream of reports flowing to the signal office, reports covering all men in signal from all companies, reports which gave the complete picture of the men at work at different activities, the personnel requirements of the sections, and recommended changes in organization which would

contribute to greater efficiency. When new men or a new company arrived, it was the men in headquarters who made the overall plans for the utilization of the men as the work required.

Besides the work of emphasis, the routine and not so routine work continues. The orderly room posted CQ rosters, arranged for shots, called company formations, scheduled the monthly physical, had its information and education program, and put men on theater guard. A day room was planned, to be built with the help of all the men. Reports and correspondence went out every day. The men were paid. A thousand and one questions were answered, from "when do I take my plane ride?" to "am I getting what I'm supposed to on my allotment?". Company punishment, barracks inspection, drivers license, adjusted service rating scores, transferring men, receiving men, filing regulations, men for train guard, rationed PX items; all these matters were handled in stride.

The supply room was busy too. Property was issued and turned in by the sections. Salvage was taken from them; new items issued. Laundry and dry cleaning was a problem for the supply sergeant. Shoe inspections and repair were common. A change in authorization required compilation of a requisition and the turn-in of equipment by the new. Whenever a man left the organization, his equipment had to be checked in to the supply room. When men left the company, supply had work to do, clearing and preparing records. The sweepers had to be supplied with the necessary cleaning and preserving materials; the mess hall constantly required additional supplies.

Except for the Atlantic crossing the cooks and the mess sergeant have worked in the mess from its organization back in 1943. Meals have been prepared in standard army messes on American troop trains, in bivouac, on board ship in strange galleys, on Indian trains, in a British mess car, wherever the company might be and however it might move. The job has been seven days a week, month after month, year and year. You can declare a holiday in almost any type of work the army may do, but not in the mess hall. The cooks have worked with detailed kitchen police, with voluntary KPs, with Indian cooks, sweepers, bearers, and at times without help. They have cooked with gasoline stoves, coal stoves, wood stoves, and charcoal burners. New tables were built for the mess hall; the place was painted; it was repaired. Food has been prepared for a hundred; at times over six hundred men have been fed for meals in the unit mess. Half the personnel has been lost to the mess by

quarantine, yet the meals were still ready. Subsistence has failed to arrive in time, yet a meal was prepared from what was on hand. The mess personnel has always worked; it always will as long as there are men in the Army.

The men of the Headquarters Platoon are proud of their work. They moved no boxes, repairs or equipment, sent no messages. But by their work they know they helped others supply and maintain signal equipment and communications. And as the first bit of work done by the company was by a man from headquarters, they know that the last little item also will be carried out by the last remaining member of Headquarters Platoon.

OPERATIONS

In the early spring of 1944, the first contingent of the 893rd Signal Company's Operation Platoon arrived at the Bengal Air Depot and immediately took their place in various jobs assigned them. At that time the signal center was theoretically a neophyte handling an over abundance of classified materials, but during the months that followed noticeable improvement became evident through the combined efforts of its personnel; additional floor space was procured for the radio, teletype and message center sections and a modern building constructed to house the rapid growth of telephone.

From this reconversion emerged a smooth-working machine of speedy communications; what constituted it, is a story itself . . .

In the beginning the minuteness of space was the principal problem. When it became obvious that more floor space was a necessity, a suitable plan was developed to coincide with the amount of work that was increasing daily. A more spacious room was obtained for radio operations, and blueprints drawn to renovate the signal center and to alleviate crowded conditions. From this transformation came a modern radio operations office, complete with air-conditioning, fluorescent lighting, and an infinite amount of working space. Communications were halted for a few hours while the entire complex systems of wiring and installations were transferred from the old room to the new. When the last wire had been connected, a switch was thrown, and immediately traffic began to flow swiftly to all parts of India and China. In this comfortable atmosphere seven positions were capable of sending and receiving traffic to and from thirteen different stations. Messages originating in Calcutta and destined for Bangalore,

1500 miles south, were sent on their way in a matter of moments. As the months wore on traffic became unduly heavy but the station's capabilities were boundless. In twenty-two months of continual operations a twenty-four hour shift was maintained to expedite communications. Transmitters and receivers were kept in excellent working condition by a thoroughly trained staff of radio mechanics who were located one mile from the operations room. A large area was the prime factor in the location of the transmitter site where space was needed for the erection of various antennas. Power generators along with the transmitters were housed here and operated remotely from the receiving end. The productive abilities of the radio section was cited in May 1945 when a commendation was received bearing the signature of three generals.

Teletype also was a cog in this system. As with the other sections in the platoon, the first teletype operators witnessed at least three major changes during the first few months on the depot. Each move was the result of a heavier volume of traffic. Facilities were increased and machines were added periodically. When the amount of traffic reached its apex during the first months of 1945, eleven machines and two switchboards were in constant operation. A great number of the stations in the India-Burma Theatre could be reached direct through switchboard lines and the remainder sent to two major relay stations over direct lines. This presented an entirely different picture in comparison to that which confronted the men on their arrival at the depot. At that time only two machines were capable of handling an infinitesimal amount of traffic, and added to this the torrential downpours of the monsoon presented incalculable difficulties in transmission. It is interesting to note that regardless of the many problems encountered, from these two machines grew the third largest teletype station in the India, Burma and China Theatres.

During this period of transition, the telephone exchange was transferred to the new building and further renovations provided additional space for the code room, which at that time was definitely necessary for the cryptographic technicians. Joining the general metamorphosis, the message center made improvements of its own; new desks were added, lights and additional fans were installed for the coming torrid weather and new filing systems inaugurated. For personnel who were doing tedious work twenty-four hours daily, these vast

changes provided improved working conditions, which, of course, resulted in greater speed and accuracy in the work being doubled due to the swift shipment of supplies throughout the theatre. Personnel were now fully trained and rapidly became adept at their respective jobs. The volume of traffic being handled had increased 100% since July 1944; code traffic increased 50% during the same period, rating about fourth in the C.B.I. The gigantic task of handling this large flow of traffic was an arduous one due to the complicated cryptographic systems. Only patience, determination and hard work made the men in this phase of operations the competent technicians who completed a tremendous job. The full story of the fine work accomplished in this section cannot be told for security regulations which still exist.

The history of the telephone section is one that deserves considerable credit. In the field of expansion, improvement and results it could not be surpassed. Barrackpore was the original location of our first telephone men and the success of A.T.C., A.S.C. and Pan American Air Lines telephonic communications was due largely to them. When the better proportion of our company's men were acclimatizing themselves in Kanchrapara, these men were laying the foundation for improved systems of communication in that area. Poles were being erected daily and one hundred twenty miles of telephone wire strung during that agonizing heat we so well remember. Meanwhile another group of technicians was assigned to the depot and immediately formulated plans for extensive expansion. Those of us who spent our first few months in the old signal center will remember the archaic Indian switchboard that was the cause of many a blatant outburst. At any time the depot was well on the way to outgrowing its original installation. The forty line board in use was incapable of handling the mounting number of calls, so in May of 1944 our office submitted to the War Department an engineered wire communications project. This plan provided for a three position Western Electric board with a capacity of 180 lines. Following this installation however, the plan eventually proved inadequate and an addition of a 300 line board aided in meeting the constant volume of calls. During this period it became apparent that aid would be necessary to dig trenches for underground cable which was replacing the outmoded overhead wiring. For this purpose seventy-five Indians, members of the British Royal Signals, were loaned to us and their surprising versatility was wel-

comed by our technicians. As business rocketed once again a plan of extension was submitted; a three position TC-10 replaced the Western Electric board which was shipped to Barrackpore and finally a six position commercial type board was installed to insure perfect service. This final project was a typical example of technical perfection since the operation was completed without interruption of service. Since January of 1944 a total of 65,000 feet of trunk and exchange wire was laid; 500 lines in continuous service and 900 calls being handled hourly. At Barrackpore the story closely resembles this; 50,000 feet of cable were laid and 500 calls being handled every hour. From figures an estimation can be made of the tremendous part our telephone section played in the development of the Bengal Air Depot.

In the final summing up, no single section or individual deserved the lion's share of the honors. The importance of teamwork cannot be over emphasized and the finished job supported the age old theory of teamwork being the wisest solution. With the remembrances of things past, in years to come each member of operations can say, "I played my part."

REPAIR

Nothing grows up over night, nor does anything worthwhile grow without effort. So it was with the building and growth of "Signal Engineering." The men who built it were not specialists drafted to continue their civilian occupations in the Army but rather were men who had done all types of work prior to their entrance into the service. Therefore, all the more credit to them for the job that was done and commended upon so often by the "higher ups."

When the company was formed, men were drawn from all types of specialist training schools to compose the nucleus of the repair platoon. There were radio repairmen from Fort Monmouth, N.J., and the Philco Training School; radar repairmen from Camp Murphy, Fla.; teletype men from the Western Signal Corps Schools; men from Camp Crowder, Mo., and a host of other technical training centers. New men came and some of the old timers dropped out, but despite the changes in personnel the purpose of the platoon never varied. Its mission was to repair all types of signal equipment and that is precisely what it did until the closing of "Signal Engineering" on November 1, 1945.

With the various specialists gathered, further training was necessary to make the platoon a smoothly running unit

with each man proficient in his assignment. At Kelly Field the men were able to get an inkling of the work they would encounter overseas. The men of each section were split up to enable the various phases of the work to be covered more thoroughly. For example, the airborne radar repairmen were broken up into groups such as ASV (Air to Surface Vessel) and IFF (Interrogation Friend or Foe) while ground radar men were made into two separate teams, each of whom could function as a unit. This did not mean that within the section one man could not do the other's work but it achieved a higher overall efficiency.

Due to the lack of training facilities at the field, some of the men, such as the teletype repairmen, were sent to San Antonio to work with the telephone company and thereby gain practical experience. The instrument repairmen carried out the T.O. duties they would continue with overseas. Whatever their jobs, the technicians had the opportunity to use and repair some of the equipment and familiarize themselves with newer sets that had come out since they attended technical schools.

Dec. 11th marked the first day of our journey that would lead us to the Bengal Air Depot. At the time of the company's arrival, B.A.D. was merely a fraction of the size that it would eventually attain. All signal repair work was done by the 886th Sig. Co., working in a shop occupying but one half of one godown in the Presidency Warehouse. It was utterly inadequate. There was not sufficient space for all the men to work and many found themselves with other sections on jobs for which they had not been trained. At the time some of the fellows believed they were doomed to a career of storage and issue work.

Simultaneously with the arrival of the 893rd, there came the 903rd Signal Company who had just spent 18 months in Egypt. As the 886th was assigned to go to Upper Assam, it became apparent that the operations of this vital depot would be left in the hands of the two remaining companies. In the meanwhile the importance of the signal work at the depot was ever increasing and it was all too obvious that the space assigned to signal repair was insufficient. It was impossible to erect any of the elaborate test equipment which put definite limitations upon repair operations. The men in the general repair section were doing their work in a machine truck kept in the signal motor pool and therefore they could do little more than was absolutely necessary and that with the greatest difficulty. With the set-up then in use

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the men did not have the opportunity to demonstrate what they could do and it was hoped by all that conditions would soon change for the better.

That change did come when three entire godowns in the Titagur Jute Mill were allotted to the signal section for the specific purpose of erecting a shop where all signal repair and maintenance could be consolidated. The idea was conceived some time in July of 1944 and work was begun almost immediately. Although work at the Presidency Warehouse did not cease, men were drawn out to go to the new location and begin the installation. Men who were working in other sections were recalled to aid in the construction of the shop where they would eventually work. Pretty soon things began shaping up nicely. The carpenters made the benches and shelves; electricians with the help of signal men wired up the benches to meet the requirements of each type of work; power men set up the power house that would take care of all needs. After that, the radio, radar, and teletype men set up their test equipment while the supply men took care of stocking the bins with all the needed spare parts and accessories. The men worked hard to make this a shop of which they could well be proud. It was. But how did they fit into the overall scheme of things in the C.B.I.? Being the largest depot in the entire theatre of operations and one of the largest outside the continental limits of the U.S., signal engineering was called upon to repair or replace faulty or damaged equipment sent in from outlying depot or service companies who were not as well equipped as the shop was. Probably the biggest job, though indirect, was to maintain the planes flying the "Hump." Regardless of what type of material it was, if it were signal equipment used by the Air Corps either in planes or on the ground, it could be whipped into shape in quick time.

Being the final echelon of repair in the theatre, only servicable equipment was sent from the shop. Material damaged beyond economic repair was salvaged while items requiring parts unavailable at the moment were set aside as "hold for parts." In one year of operation signal engineering's output was far greater than expectations. During that period 38,191 items were repaired and put into servicable condition. At the peak of production 8,010 units were turned out in a months time. The record was an enviable one and a concrete contribution to allied success in South East Asia.

On the first of November 1944, signal engineering was officially opened. This

was no makeshift affair but rather a professional type workshop. No longer were the repairmen cramped by lack of space, nor were they hampered by poor lighting. The high ceiling and cross ventilation made for a very comfortable atmosphere during the hot, oppressive days of the summer and monsoon season. Each section had an allotted amount of space according to its size. Radio, being the largest, had one entire godown as did the general repair while the radar and teletype repairment shared a godown. Probably the most unique facility was the air-conditioned instrument repair trailer which was stationed outside the building.

A visitor being shown around would see men in the radio shop working on all types of aircraft and ground receivers and transmitters, making use of all the latest test equipment. He would see men working on dynamotor rectifiers, radio compasses, special service receivers, and a multitude of other equipment far too long to list here. If the same visitor could gain entrance to the restricted radar section he would pass men working on various kinds of secret and complex electronic devices . . . things practically unknown before the advent of this war. Going on a bit further he would find men repairing teletype machines. In the adjoining godown, he could watch welders, machinists, engine mechanics, and power men all going about their respective duties. In the air-cooled instrument trailer men could be found repairing delicate precision instruments used in all types of signal corps equipment. Seeing all this he could piece together a cohesive picture of what was meant by the name "signal engineering."

Moreover, the job was not merely held to the confines of the immediate shop, men were sent out to other bases all over India, Burma, and Assam on temporary duty and detached service to perform special duties. There was a small detachment of radio and radar repairmen sent to the Barrackpore Air Base to install equipment in newly assembled aircraft and maintain the equipment used in the planes stationed at the field. Prior to the assault on Rangoon we had men in Akyab to check over the radio installations in the planes and make any last minute repairs. Similarly during the battle for Mandalay men were sent to Burma to install units in the planes that were to attack the enemy in that stronghold. In addition to this many of our technicians were sent throughout India, Burma, and Assam to give instructions in the latest types equipment to the men who did not have the opportunity to get

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first hand information. An example of this are the two radar repairmen sent to various bases throughout the IB Theatre to instruct personnel in the operation and maintenance of navigational equipment. Another group consisting of radio and radar repairmen were sent to Bangalore to teach Indian technicians how to repair American radio and radar equipment. This was more the case in radar for it was here that new types of equipment were constantly coming out and it was the job of the men at B.A.D. To see that the men "up the line" were familiarized with these sets. In addition to sending out roving instructors and repairmen, there were men from many of the outlying areas coming to signal engineering to learn and get practical experience in new material.

STORAGE AND ISSUE

One of the important jobs which the signal section of Bengal Air Depot had to perform was the supplying of signal equipment to all other air depots and service groups in the India-Burma and China Theaters. In doing that job, in cooperation with the other signal companies on the base, our own storage and issue section has had a long and difficult job. Among the first 893rd men to be attached and later assigned to the depot were the storage and issue men who needed to help organize and expand the supply installations, which had been in operation less than three months before we arrived. There had not been nearly enough men to handle the growing volume of work. Although we were green in the business of warehousing, we had had valuable training in handling and packing signal equipment in our work with the company's own technical equipment.

The men of the section who wrestled with heavy boxes of equipment, all the way from Rend to Bengal Air Depot, by way of Fresno, Kelly Field, and overseas ports, remember what that training meant. And the men of the other sections who worked all day at their own jobs and then were put on night detail to help the S&I Section get its job done on time, have painful memories of what "training" meant in that respect.

To the storage and issue men, Kelly Field was a place of hard work. The signal equipment which had been packed at Rend and Fresno had been proven inadequately crated for overseas shipment. So the men of this section, with the help of "volunteers" from other sections, worked many long hours repacking everything, as well as packing the equipment which was being issued for

the company. Those men all remember how they sweated and toiled, while several sergeants and a certain corporal drove them to greater efforts.

The warehouse in which we were then working was conveniently located near the E.M. Club, so some simple refreshments always tasted good, along about the middle of the afternoon. And then other recreation from pushing boxes around was afforded by free "tours" of the field, via the busses which ran past the warehouse. Night work usually ended with a social get-together with hamburgers and other eats, around the tables in the cafeteria.

The "Battle of Kelly Field" was a big one, but the night finally did arrive when everything was packed, and the boxes were loaded into two box cars and sent on their way to the Pacific coast to be accompanied on the sea voyage to India by Lt. Leighton and T/Sgt. Crivani, while the rest of us went by way of the Atlantic, North Africa, Suez Canal to Bombay.

During the next three months, the section had little work to do other than supervise the handling of T.A.T. boxes. Probably the most dangerous job of handling these boxes was in loading onto the famous "40&8's" at Casablanca. Here, the work of transferring boxes to the small box cars was made hazardous by the reckless manner in which the yard engines slammed the cars around, including those we were loading. The fact that no box of costly equipment was smashed by being caught between the door of a car and the tailboard of a truck, was due only to luck.

When the T.A.T. boxes were unloaded at Bombay, it was a wonderful sight to see all those Indians to push our boxes around.

On about the 15th of March, the first group of S&I men were attached to B.A.D. and went to work at Presidency and Wellington Warehouses, and the remaining men of the section followed a few days later. In those days, the Presidency contained not only bin stock, but also radio repair shop, general repair, and the packing and shipping department, all in one godown. The next few months were hectic ones. Equipment which had been brought into the warehouse and been stored in a helter-skelter fashion, so that no one knew where half of it was, and much of it did not have any stock numbers. The greatest difficulties were due to the way the signal installation was spread out, with warehouse-receiving at Wellington and bin storage at Presidency, and signal stock records in the signal center building on the depot itself. A great deal of time and ef-

fort was wasted passing papers back and forth. However, over a period of three or four months, these things were gradually straightened out, and both stock records and receiving sections were moved to Presidency, where sheds were being built in the yard to provide greater working space.

About three weeks after we went to work at the warehouses, with the 886th SCDA, the 903rd SCDA arrived in Egypt, and the signal section of the depot went thru the throes of becoming organized and consolidated. As we look back now, confusion seems to have reigned in those days, but somehow things were straightened out, the volume of shipments steadily increased, the number of shipping tickets zeroed off because of non-availability of stock steadily decreased, and in five or six months the department was working in more efficient manner. During those first few months, incoming freight was stored in the compound at Hastings Mill, next to the Wellington area, while bulk stock was stored at Wellington. The first change was made in early May of 1944, when AAF and ATC headquarters moved from Delhi to Hastings, at which time we had to clean out the compound and move the equipment to compound No. 3, on the other side of the river. This was supposed to be done within 48 hours, so everyone worked in the boiling tropical sun and through the hot night; the "cats" growled and clanked, men sweated and swore, as the many 6&6's and semi-trailers were loaded with heavy boxes; the truck drivers rolled their heavy loads at a fast pace over the tortuous 13-mile, crowded road to deliver the equipment not more than a half mile from its starting point, on the other side of the river, where other machinery and men worked just as feverishly to unload it and restack it in some semblance or order.

In June 1944, construction was started on the signal corps special purpose vehicles motor pool, and in a short time it was filling up with equipment. The vehicles and all signal equipment were checked for efficient operation before being shipped out again. In the month of July it was clear that more space would be needed for the storing and processing of freight, and requests were made for it, and finally in October, we were allotted 227,000 feet at Khamarhati compound, and this area was in use by November.

In December, receiving (incoming freight) moved to signal motor pool, because of shortage of space at Compound No. 3, and repairable-receiving set up at the latter place. All this time, the sec-

tion was handling from 900 to 2200 tons of freight a month, handling both incoming shipments from the States and outgoing shipments to other depots and service groups. The peak of shipments was reached in January 1945 when about 1300 tons were shipped.

In November, the new signal engineering shops were put into use, and so radio repair moved out of Presidency, and that space was used for bin stock. Steel bins were erected and the stock moved into them. Only the men who worked in the bins can appreciate how much easier that made their work. Several months later the steel hangar was erected in the yard at Presidency, so there was, finally, sufficient working space.

The end of the war in Europe brought a sudden influx of signal equipment from European and Mediterranean Theaters, but it had not been entirely processed and placed into stock when the end of the Pacific War caused a sudden drop in requirements, and business dropped off almost completely. There was still a great deal of work to do, before the company could consider its job entirely done, but its important mission had been carried out, and everyone could relax a little more.

There was little excitement to all this work, but who, among the Presidency veterans, can forget those rides twice a day in 6&6 trucks? During the first monsoon season it was always in open trucks. If there was a tarpaulin on the truck, it didn't rain that day, and if the truck was entirely open it poured cats and dogs. And then there were all the minor skirmishes with Indian civilian vehicles and Army convoys, and ox carts. Certainly, the truck drivers who had to wheel thousands of loads of freight and men over the roads will never forget them.

Getting happily fed in the Army is always difficult, but when a meal is served as dinners were at the Presidency for so many months, insult is added to injury. The food was the same as was served in the mess hall, and was hot, but boxes and desks had to serve as tables, and one had to fan away the hordes of flies with one hand while eating with the other. After enough complaints had been made, however, arrangements were easily made for those men to eat dinner at Hastings in a well arranged mess hall, and everyone dined happily ever after.

Every man in the section was responsible for the success with which the job was done, and it is impossible in this space to recount the achievements of each one, or to mention all the trials

and tribulations that went with the job. Furthermore, the section was helped out in many instances, especially before the signal engineering shops had been put in operation, by men from the other sections. The tremendous work and headaches behind the tonnage figures given above cannot be fully appreciated by anyone who did not share them . . . The monotony of checking and identifying many hundreds of thousands of items, big and small; the effort to find storage space for everything and keep exact record of the location of every single item; the press of urgent emergency requisitions which had to be accurately filled, packed, and shipped; the heavy rambling loads on 6x6 cargo trucks and 40-foot semi-trailers; the exhausting 120-degree heat and humidity and the pouring monsoon rains, and the boredom of posting records of every little change in every item. It was a tremendous job. We were part of the tremendous team that did it.

HISTORY OF B.A.D.

Bengal Air Depot is one of the largest Army Air Force depots outside the continental limits of the United States. Its mission has been to assemble all air force supplies, and that of the arms and services shipped into the China, India and Burma Theater from the various sources within this theater, from overseas stations and from the United States; timed to meet future obligations, commitments, and issues of supplies to support and meet the tactical requirements of our fighting forces and those of our allies to defeat the common enemy.

The inception of the depot was conceived on January 9, 1943, at which time the Indian Jute Mills Association relinquished 30,000 square feet of their property for storage of American supplies, and 15,000 square feet for aircraft engine overhaul. The spectacular growth in the ensuing 30 months till September 1945 reveals two and one quarter million square feet of indoor storage space, and five million square feet of outdoor storage space, an area covering 480 acres. The ever increasing demands on the depot evolved the expansion of the military complement from 14 officers and 51 enlisted men in April 1943 to 296 officers and 4,785 enlisted men in August 1945.

The technical skill and ability of our military personnel was augmented from the beginning by Indian civilians. As early as July 1943, 524 civilians were trained with patience and diligence, supervised and administered with outstanding success. In direct proportion to the growth of the depot, civilian em-

ployees have a total force of 20,000 as of July 1945.

From a skeleton organization of one military unit in April 1943, the depot has grown to 30 organizations and 40 activities and departments. The officers and enlisted men of these units and departments are responsible severally and independently for the shipment of supplies in 1944 equal to 103,065 short tons and of 127,829 short tons in the first seven months of 1945. From the initial production figures of 70 overhauled aircraft engines for the last month of 1943 to 555 aircraft engines overhauled during the month of August 1945, illustrates the increased output of the technical production record during the development of the depot.

Port congestion, transportation, personnel, and facilities for adequate warehousing reached gigantic proportions to be surmounted to expedite, pursue and dispatch supplies when and where demanded by the tactical organizations in China-Burma-India. Obstacles were surmounted regardless of overtaxed warehouses and facilities and insufficient personnel, in humid weather.

SOCIAL

Successful social events have played a major part in relaxation throughout the history of our company. Future reminiscences of our life in the Army will not be confined entirely to the construction of white fences, the early morning calisthenics, the constant repetition of the articles of war, the interminable waiting on chow lines. No, these things will not become imbedded in our memories, for it is the good times which we had on our off duty hours that are vivid, and made our life in the Army bearable if not enjoyable.

Those of us who formed the embryo of the 893rd remember all too vividly the initial social affair staged in Reno during the spring of '43. This event, the forerunner of many successes, proved conclusively that we were endowed with numerous personalities who were potential social organizers. In June of that year, arrangements were made to hold a party in the Century Club. As had been the case in subsequent functions, female guests were plentiful; attractive undergraduates from the University of Nevada, U.S.O. girls, individual acquaintances, and congenial wives of our G.I.'s, all added to the merriment.

(. . . Remember those fishes. those hundreds of fishes . . . and then that man with the gold bar on his collar made a futile attempt to play a saxophone! . . . the roundup of soldiers from the Reno streets to accommodate the over-

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whelming majority of girls . . . the eastern "Lindy-Hopper" cutting a rug with a western "shuffler" . . .)

Then Fresno, but the stay was of such short duration that organized social events were nonexistent. However, the majority of us can turn back time and remember the favorite nite spots and entertainment places that afforded pleasure and gaiety after duty hours . . .

(. . . The blatant strains of the juke box in the Town Club . . . the gum-chewing jitterbug you met at the "Inferno" who insisted on your throwing her over your back . . . the metropolitan atmosphere of the Bamboo Room . . . the romantic beauty of El Rancho . . .)

But the vertex of our social life in the Army came during our brief stop amidst the breathtaking scenery of Yosemite Nat'l Park. The frequent excursions to "Camp Curry" in the depths of the valley carried us into a veritable utopia. There we found a summer resort which offered infinite opportunities for dancing, swimming, horseback-riding and sight seeing. Beneath the grandeur and magnificence of the fire-fall we found escape from the boredom and monotony of Army routine.

(. . . The awe-inspiring suddenness of beauty as we emerged from the tunnel during the descent to the valley . . . the clean smell of nature . . . the crowded dance floor, the lilting music, the welcome intermission . . . the boisterous scramble for trucks at midnite . . . and the cold, mad journey back under a blanket of stars . . .)

Let's remember San Antonio and the Knights of Columbus Hall. It was in October and our guests of honor were the charming employees of the Kelly Field Signal Section. In the basement, refreshments were served in large proportions, while in the ballroom an all-girl orchestra played. This one was so good that we duplicated it in November. But that wasn't all . . .

(. . . What about the beer that automatically appeared in your hand as you went into the basement . . . the enormous quantities of "black gold" . . . the flash of the camera which recorded the mirth and merriment . . .)

The months that followed were months of preparation which left little time for frivolity. And remember that unhappy New Years Eve, 1944, when we were huddled on the deck of the H.M.S. Andes and our New Years celebration consisted of a WAC stepping out of her cabin and whispering, "Happy New Year, boys." Not much of a social event, was it? Or could we consider . . .

(. . . The enthusiastic part we all took in the community sing that was suggested by one of our dearly departed . . .

the little Reno on the foredeck . . . the gatherings we held at eleven o'clock each morning . . . and the much-traded copies of "Perry Mason" . . .)

In recognition of our first anniversary overseas, a party was held at the Army Recreation Center in Calcutta. The outdoor pavilion with its dim lights resembled a stateside night club, atmosphere included. Beer, liquor, mixed drinks, sandwiches and cakes were served to the individual tables by Indian bearers. Civilian employees of the Bengal Air Depot and their friends plus several Red Cross hostesses were our guests. (And a good time was had by all!)

Our social life overseas was interspersed with many worthwhile tours sponsored by the American Red Cross. Included in these trips were visits to the Czech village, a luxurious community which offered a sociable atmosphere including swimming, dancing, and movies. While there, many of our men were taken on a tour of the "Bata" shoe factory, the local "Thom McCann." Horseback riding enthusiasts were given ample opportunity to indulge in their favorite pastime at the special service riding academy near Alipore. Another group of men visited the motion picture studios in the Tollygunge section of Calcutta where they watched a scene being filmed. One of the most interesting of the tours was the visit to "Krishnigar," a Catholic mission school which conducted classes for its orphan inmates as well as for the neighboring village children. The priests and nuns were extremely cordial towards all visitors and did all in their power to make each visit enjoyable. The children were overjoyed at the sight of each group of G.I.'S and the girls would dance and sing for us while the boys showed how well they could march and drill. Their reward was the inevitable chewing gum and candy.

Anxiously awaited by many of the men was the monthly birthday party in the unit mess hall. Then the birthday celebrants were served their dinner and cake by the first sergeant, assisted by other men of high social standard.

Of course there were the smaller, but equally important social gatherings in the day room and barracks where our men played the indoor games that seem so popular in the Army. These gatherings, however, were not organized, but purely voluntary.

Today, ready for reconversion to civilian life, our parties, our white fences, and India are vivid recollections. But in that "tomorrow" when these things become dim memories, we shall still recall with glowing pleasure the family that invited us for Sunday dinner in

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Reno . . . that date in Fresno who turned out to be Miss "Right" . . . that elderly British couple in Calcutta who wanted us to feel at home . . . that buddy with whom you traveled across the world . . . and always the worthwhile experiences and practical education we accumulated during our time in the Army.

Our social events, though not the most important part of our Army life, had great success in keeping our morale high, and those of us who participated in these affairs will always recall them with a great deal of pleasure.

SPORTS

The story of athletics in the 893rd did not begin until we arrived overseas. Because of the heavy training schedule, there were no organized teams, though a few of our boys did play on the champion Army Air Base softball team.

Camp Kanchrapara marked the beginning of our baseball and softball teams. Although there was no baseball played at the time, the majority of the men played on the softball team as well as the baseball team. It began when the men cleared a field for us right in the company area and the fellows played inter-company games. From there sprang up a team that represented the company. The men worked out together and they booked games with other teams in the camp. There was no organized league but the team took on all comers and won a large share of the games. The great handicap was that the men were continually drifting down to B.A.D. to work or going on train guard, making it very difficult to keep a smooth running team.

When the entire company finally moved to B.A.D. the men reorganized the team, christened it the "Bears" and entered the Calcutta Softball League. In league competition they were as smooth as silk, winning their first six games without too much difficulty. The seventh game brought their downfall with a heart-breaking defeat at the hands of the "Hotdogs," the leading team. It was a 1-0 decision lost on an unearned run and was a real thriller down to the bitter end. After that they split the two remaining games and placed third in the league, thus eliminated from the playoffs. In spite of their losing out in the end, the team demonstrated great form and greater promises for the future.

Along about September 1944, the baseball team, also known as the "Bears," began working out and entered in the B.A.D. competition. The first four games were debacles . . . we wuz slaughtered . . . the logical explanation lies in the fact we had no pitcher with any too

much control and the results were disastrous. The fifth game saw outfielder Tommy Gibson take the mound and immediately the team went from the debit side to the credit side of the ledger. In quick order the team floored their next six opponents and ended the season with a .600 average, very creditable considering the shaky start. In these final six games it was not only the hurling that was vastly improved but the fielding was solidly behind the pitcher and the batters were in there punching in the runs.

The coming of the winter season to Calcutta also saw the birth of the basketball team. The fellows had the zip but they seriously lacked height. There was not a single six footer on the squad, which would be enough to drive the best coach to distraction, but still they shaped up nicely and entered in the depot league competition. Working a zone defense throughout the 22 games the team put up a commendable showing winning 11 of them. Late in the season they held the towering, championship 9th Engine Team to a mere 7 point victory but the high light of the season was the thrilling one point victory over the highly vaunted Barrackpore Team. It was nip and tuck all the way till the last twenty seconds when a well placed shot sent our team to a well earned victory.

Spring of 1945 saw the softball team reforming once more but this time there was an addition in the form of the "Marauders." The other team was no longer the "Bears," but now played under the title of the "Yardbirds." The teams both played in the Depot League but were handicapped by the fact that the men were going on rest camp and on furlough so nothing much came of it. The real excitement of the spring was caused by the Signal League competition. The 893rd and the 903rd each entered two teams while the 923rd had one. It was arranged to have each team play ten games and then the highest two would be in the playoff for the championship. The "Yardbirds" considered as the first team of the company was almost conceded as the best team, while the Marauders were considered the weak sisters. The Marauders were made up of men who played little or no ball and also some veterans who did not play with the Yardbirds while the Yardbirds had the men who played both years. Excitement ran high when the two teams met for the first time and the "Yardbirds" entered at about 3-2 favorites. The only reason that the odds were so low was that the "Marauders" had won their first four consecutive games. Then both teams played heads up ball and in the end the

Marauders beat them out with a final splurge of runs by the score of 7-1.

The league games continued and as it developed, the 923rd won undisputed first place leaving the two 893rd teams to struggle for the playoff berth. This was settled in the tenth and last game of the season. Both teams were in excellent shape, and feelings as well as betting ran high. There was a big turn out for the game and it lived up to all expectations in the way of thrills. It was a seesawing game but the high powered Yardbirds could not overcome the scrap and fire of the Marauders who finally emerged the victory to the tune of a 5-4 score.

In the playoffs the Marauders met the 923rd Intercoms and in an exciting series which the Intercoms won, three games to two. It was a disappointment to lose in the post season title series but one and all agree that the Marauders played magnificent ball throughout and left no doubt as to their ability.

There was a lull in the field of company teams until the month of September rolled around and the basketball team played a few games in the Depot League. They didn't do too well, winning a little less than half their contests. A number of the men played with the "Signal" team in the I.B. tournament held in the Monsoon Square Garden. They were eliminated in the quarters after having played some excellent basketball.

About the same time the baseball team got together again and developed into one of the finest teams in this area. They won their first 14 games in a row but finally stopped in the fifteenth. It seemed that they couldn't be beaten with the fine hitting and fielding and magnificent pitching. Each man was a potential threat to the opposing hurlers and the staff of pitchers was no longer confined to one man. This team probably represents the best put out by the 893rd.

Thus far mentioned were merely our major sports but there were a number of other games that the men indulged in. For example, we had John Skrllec who ran the 440 and held down one of the positions in the All-India Track and Field Meet in Calcutta in the fall of 1944. Then, too, we had Joe Kuryak who played in the India-Burma Golf Tournament and came in seventh place in a field of many entries. There were two sets of bar bells that the men had made and quite a few of the men went in for this body building sport.

The tennis courts afforded the men to get out and slap that tennis ball around while the two newly erected handball courts let the men so inclined play. In

the nearby jute mill there was a swimming pool in which the people were kind enough to permit us to swim. This was a relief during the beastly hot days of the summer and monsoon season. Last to be mentioned but not least by any means in importance was pingpong. The men made their own tables and were supplied by Special Service with the nets, paddles and balls and soon ping pong enthusiasts sprung up all over. The company had a team that played other depot companies but for the most part the sport was just played among the men.

That is the story of what we did while we were over here. We were very fortunate in being in a location where we could take part in all these activities and we did our level best to take advantage of it.

BACK ISSUES

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BOOK REVIEWS



CHINA IN THE YEAR 2001. By Han Suyin. Basic Books, Inc., New York, N. Y. November 1967. \$5.95.

This is no apology for Communist China, but rather a dogmatic assertion of China's growing power and revolutionary force. From 11 visits to China in the past decade, the author sums up trends and quotes Mao at great length. The chapter entitled "China and the World" reads like a cold threat against the United States and Soviet Russia.

UNDER THE ANCESTORS SHADOW; Kinship, Personality and Social Mobility in Village China. By Francis L. K. Hsu. Doubleday Anchor Original (Natural History Library). December 1967. Paperback, \$1.95.

Originally published in 1948, this is an updated edition based on material gathered by the author between 1941 and 1943 while he was on the faculty of the National Yunnan University, in a remote village of 8,000 in southwestern China. He had tons of material—from intricate floor plans of sprawling family homes to a chart of sex taboo days—but his main concern was with family life and ancestor worship in pre-Revolutionary China. In a new chapter, the author says that only "time will tell" how far the traditional pattern can adapt itself to meet the new demands of Communism.

THE ESPIONAGE ESTABLISHMENT. By David Wise and Thomas B. Ross. Random House. February 1968. \$5.95.

This is the third book about espionage by the authors, and they view with alarm the growth and power of undercover agencies both here and abroad. This book is a survey of the personalities, organization and methods of operation of the intelligence organizations of the Soviet Union, Great Britain, Communist China and the United States.

SINGAPORE: THE BATTLE THAT CHANGED THE WORLD. By James Leasor. Doubleday & Co. February 1968. \$5.95.

Key to this narrative is the Japanese campaign to capture the city of Singapore, but the total story is one describing the events which led to this historical moment as well as the after-effects. The battle of Singapore was one in which the

picture of British colonial might was destroyed . . . the time when the light of the Empire went out in the Far East.

ESCAPE FROM CORREGIDOR. By Edgar D. Whitcomb. Paperback Library. December 1967. Paperback, 75c.

The author, new Secretary of State of Indiana, was an Air Force navigator in the Philippines when the war with Japan broke out. Going it alone, he managed to escape the Bataan Death March, outfox the Japanese and live to fight against them.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THE LUFTWAFFE. By Werner Baumbach. Ballantine Books, November 1967. Paperback, 75c.

This is an account of the German Air Force from the early 1930's to the end of World War II. The author began his career as a dive bomber pilot, served as commander of the bomber fleet in the Mediterranean and finished the war as General of the Bombers, the highest post in the German bomber command. He took orders only from Herman Goering and Adolf Hitler. Not yet 30 when the war was over, the author fled to Argentina and was later killed in an air crash. The book is interesting, but irritating.

QUOTATIONS FROM CHAIRMAN MAO TSE-TUNG. By Mao Tse-Tung, with an introduction by Lin Piao. Foreign Languages Press, Peking.

This is the original handbook of the Chinese Red Guards, in English, now being sold in the United States by China Books & Periodicals, San Francisco. Ex-CBI Roundup offers no comment.

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CBI DATELINE

MADRAS—One hundred and twenty-six people, including 12 women, died after mistaking varnish for alcohol. They had celebrated Aadi Amavasai day in the Krishnampet area. Most of the victims were corporation sweepers and peons. Madras State is "dry" but illicit liquor is apparently not difficult to get. Poor people usually consume cheap and often harmful concoctions, like varnish which has some alcohol content. The victims reportedly bought this "liquor" at a local shop, and as it was a festival day the entire families had taken the drink.

GAUHATI—Twenty-three people were killed and 25 injured when they were swept off the roof of the 1 Dn Avadh-Tirhut Mail by the branch of a banyan tree overhanging the railway track. It has not been definitely established whether the roof travellers were free-trippers taking advantage of the Independence Day festive atmosphere or bona fide travellers forced to the roof for want of accommodation inside the train.

CALCUTTA—The West Bengal Congress Party's protest demonstration in the Dalhousie Square area was over rising prices and "The United Front Government's failure in the food front". More than 25,000 people from Burdwan, Hooghly, Howrah, 24 Parganas and Calcutta came to block the approach roads to Writers Building. Several thousand counter demonstrators gathered at the crossing of Mangoe Lane and Dalhousie Square and shouted pro-U.F. slogans. Traffic was disrupted for 3 hours.

RAIPUR—The sacrifice of a nine-year-old son by an educated couple was reported from the tribal district of Bastar. An officer on deputation to the Tribal Welfare Department at Dantewada and his wife were alleged to have strangled their third child. The body was found placed on a safe in the prayer room with evidence of some ritual having been performed. The parents claimed that the boy would come back to life after six hours. They are reported to be followers of some cult believing in human sacrifice.

NEW DELHI—Ratna, a young tigress, created a sensation by escaping from her cell at Delhi Zoo. She roamed about for over an hour and it took 100 men to bring her back. There were five tigers and an equal number of panthers in her section, but the sweeper forgot to

lock the door to Ratna's house. The ranger sent out a warning and chowkidars sped toward their quarters. The director ran for his gun, called for drums, crackers, lathis, nets and trap cages, and a beat was organized. By this time Ratna had gone back to the bush. Finally a second row of beaters formed a line and she was caught between the lines. She finally just got up and walked towards the cells—but chose a store-room full of old bottles, signboards, empty buckets and other junk. She wouldn't enter the transfer cage so they left her in the store room until she "cooled" down. Ratna is from the 1964 litter of Radha, the tigress who has given birth to many a white tiger.

CALCUTTA—"A colleague recently holidaying in Mysore says that among the best friends he made there were six monkeys, all belonging apparently to the same family. Outside his hotel room every morning these creatures would gather; they had earlier made the discovery that a fair amount of fruit usually entered the room. The monkeys were not aggressive, in spite of their long tails; nor were they servile, like some human beggars. They just waited outside the window, not exactly gheraoing, and made various noises to make their demands heard. The best part of the performance was seen when the monkeys dealt with a banana. It was peeled so neatly. Nothing wasted; but no inedible portion eaten either. The loot of fruit was shared, the kids getting preference. The head of the monkey family did not casually throw the banana skin just anywhere but deposited it in a bin near by. Our colleague suggests that his beloved Calcutta would be a cleaner place if its lovable residents followed the example set by the Bangalore monkeys."—Indian Notebook.

NEW DELHI—Even as the controversy over the role of regional languages continues, a large number of the universities have already switched over to regional languages, either wholly or in conjunction with English. A quick survey of the university scene shows that while the science students, particularly at the post-graduate level prefer English as the medium of instruction and examination, there is an ever-increasing number who have already changed over to the regional language. In most universities the number of English-medium pupils is indeed falling.

NEW DELHI—India has six million government employees; 2.4 million with the Central Government and 3.6 million with the States. The number of employees is going up by about six percent a year. Over 1,000,000 new posts have been created by the Centre every year.



TEACHER with his pupils at a school in south China. Photo by J. L. Rosenfeld.

Tour to Peking

● Four Italian cars drove out of St. Peter's Square in Rome December 11, 1967, after receiving a papal blessing for a 22,000-mile road tour to Peking. The tour led by Italian explorer and filmmaker Maner Lualdi, will cross 26 countries on its way, through Paris, Berlin, Moscow, Istanbul, Beirut, Tehran, Kabul, Calcutta, Rangoon, Bangkok, Saigon and Hong Kong. The "Brotherhood and Peace Rally" commemorates the 60th anniversary of a Peking-Paris auto trip made by Italian journalists Scipione Borghese and Luigi Barzini. Alfredo Cardinal Cicignani, Vatican secretary of state, gave the Pope's blessing and best wishes to the 10 members of the expedition. Lualdi said he hoped the tour cars and two supply trucks would be granted authorization to drive from Hong Kong to Peking through Communist China. They

hope to reach Peking sometime in late March.

(From a newspaper clipping submitted by Perry Schwartz, Southfield, Mich.)

Resigns Position

● Travis L. Smith III, a World War II veteran of CBI, recently resigned the post of director of planning and engineering at the Port of Houston, after being employed by the City of Houston for 28 years. He had been director of public works and engineering for the city before taking the port engineer position. A resident of Houston since 1914, Smith was an engineering graduate of Texas A&M, and served in the Army Corps of Engineers in Burma during World War II. As a captain, Smith took 30 men with orders to build an airstrip and a connection between the Ledo and Burma Roads. They had to walk 120 miles through the Himalayan mountains, completing the trip in six

days. Then, with a gang of 8,000 conscripted Chinese, they completed the road in four months at an elevation of 11,000 feet. The day the first trucks came through, Smith, who had been on his feet 124 hours, collapsed with malaria. The Army flew him home, and in 1945 he left the Army as a major to return to his desk at City Hall.

(From a newspaper clipping turned in by William A. Cross, Houston, Tex.)

124th Cavalry

● Is there a basha in the West Los Angeles, Santa Monica and Culver City area? I would like to join. Keep up the good work. I was with the HUT TWO FOUR Cavalry of Mars Task Force in Burma.

SAM MASSEY,
Los Angeles, Calif.

We couldn't answer CBIer Massey's inquiry, because he didn't put his street address on the letter, and we can't find his name on our mailing list. Try us again!—Ed.

Quick Change Noted

● Got a big charge out of the January Commander's Message, by Al Frankel, featuring my picture! Most people would imagine that Al got awfully fat and pretty gray in a very short time. Being the National Commander really doesn't change a guy that fast. He may get gray, but not fat.

JOE NIVERT,
Youngstown, Ohio

Our faces are red, as the result of a mixup in pictures. For some reason unknown to everyone—probably the gremlins were responsible—the picture of Past National Commander Joe Nivert appeared over National Commander Al Frankel's column in the January issue.—Ed.

Commander's Message

by

Alfred Frankel

National Commander
China-Burma-India
Veterans Assn.



Another wing-ding was put on for us when we visited the Mahoning Valley Basha on January 20th. Rose and Jim DeChristefero took us in hand at the Youngstown airport and after delivering us to our motel, showed us the sights of the area. Then we had lunch at their home and spent a pleasant, relaxing afternoon with them.

That evening we had the pleasure of once again seeing our many friends. Familiar faces from past reunions and new ones that we were happy to meet. We reminisced about past reunions, which we hope gave them the fever, hope to see them in Iowa.

After a delicious dinner which was set up by the DeChristeferos and Lesnanskys, I had the honor of installing a new slate of officers with Jim DeChristefero as Commander for a repeat term. I was then called upon to make a few remarks; I responded with my usual aplomb. We were then entertained by a virtuoso of the harmonica, who rendered music via all sizes of this instrument. To our surprise Joe Nivert joined in playing a duet with him, and brought down the house with his talent. We had a great deal of fun after this with games that were laugh provoking. Joe once again sparked the party as toastmaster.

Our stay was delightful, every minute of the Mahoning Valley hospitality was enjoyed. Sorry that it couldn't have been longer, but once again we take a rain-check and hope to stay longer the next time.

Well gang, I've reached the halfway point as National Commander and it has been six of the most wonderful months of my life. Six months that I'm not likely to forget. Everything that has happened has been appreciated, especially the many fine letters received, with offers of assistance.

Our organization has come a long way since the first reunion held in Milwaukee in 1948. This also was the year that the Wisconsin CBI Club instigated and made arrangements for this annual affair. Back then, they weren't sure where the '49 reunion would be held, but there has

been one every year and we hope to keep the ball rolling for many more years. From one basha in Milwaukee, we have spread to virtually every state in the union, with bashas in major cities and states.

The Milwaukee Basha celebrated this twentieth anniversary on February 8th, with a party held at the Schlitz Brewery. I phoned and talked to our first National Commander, Les Dencker. Sorry that I couldn't be there, cause when I talked with Les sounded like they were having a party in true CBI pattern—real Ding Hao. Happy Anniversary! Here's to another 20 years of great times.

The National Executive Board meeting will be held in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on May 3rd and 4th. Ray Alderson has informed me that all plans are made for a whiz of a time. Try to make it.

Toledo will be the site of the Ohio state meeting on April 27th. I've had word from State Commander Ben Davies and Eddie Stipes that a gala time is planned. My beautiful wife and I plan to attend, and are looking forward to it. We understand a gala time is planned with all sorts of goodies.

If there are any outfits that would like to hold their reunion with us, please contact me. I know that there are many groups that hold their own and feel that they may lose their identity by joining with us. I doubt that this would happen. If anything, it would tend to strengthen the bond that keeps these groups together. It would be to our mutual benefit to do this. Our ranks are thinning . . . so how about it, you guys?

The groundhog, the famous Pennsylvania institution, saw his shadow when he came out of his hole. This means only six more weeks of winter—I know you all look forward to my monthly weather report . . . with the help of our little animal friend you have it for this month.

In these troubled times, it is good to know that we have this CBIVA organization. We should all be thankful for the warmth and comradeship of our organization. It is my earnest hope that we will have a quick and lasting peace. Let us continue to get together as often as possible.

ALFRED FRANKEL
120 Yellowstone Rd.
Plymouth Meeting, Pa.

Be Sure to Notify Roundup

When You Change Your Address.



FARMER in India washes some of the dirt off a couple skinny cattle. Photo by J. L. Rosenfeld.

Merrill's Marauders

● Am very pleased with Ex-CBI Roundup; was not aware of its publication until I attended the Merrill's Marauders reunion last September at Bridgeport, Conn. Surely it is a source of information and a renewal of the days all of us spent in the CBI Theater during World War II. Actually though we the Merrill's Marauders fought the Japanese in the green hell of Burma, we also spent some time in India and China.

CHARLES R. WEHRLE,
Columbus, Ohio

327th Harbor Craft

● Will try to give a brief history of the 327th Harbor Craft Co. which operated in the Calcutta-Budge Budge area. I believe this unit was more or less activated at Charleston, South Carolina, where I joined it during the summer of 1943. Went by rail to Camp Patrick Henry for staging, then aboard USS General Mann at Newport News. From

there to Casablanca. Went by "40 & 8" to Oran where we went first cabin on a former British liner, "SS Winchester Castle." At Port Said we transferred to barges in the Suez Canal where we were transported to another British troop transport, the "SS Otranto" which was quite in contrast to our trip from Casablanca. From Port Said we embarked for Bombay, then across India by train via Nagpur to Howrah where we then went by truck across the Hooghly into Calcutta. We were based temporarily at the Lady Bradbourne College rest camp until we secured our own permanent camp up country on the Barrackpore Trunk Road. The 327th along with the 326th HC Co. hauled supplies upriver to various US installations using MTL's and sea mules for towing power. I was assigned to the maintenance section as an electrician and were based at King George Docks. Tony Alane, Bob Shives and Tony Cabral were the other members

of the electrical gang. Stayed with the 327th until my orders were cut in November 1945. Also put in some time at Khulna on DS prior to going to Kanchrapara for return to the States. Maybe some former members of either outfit can add more to this with specific dates.
HOWARD GORMAN,
Sonora, Calif.

758th Railway Bn.

● Was in Company C, 758th Railway Shop Battalion, and have been a subscriber to Ex-CBI Roundup since about 1946. Continue to enjoy it very much. At present I am acting head of the quality control and research department for the Dairy Division of Safeway Stores, Inc., while we await the arrival of a new PhD to replace our former director. My official title, however, is chief chemist.

JOHN A. BANTLY,
Concord, Calif.

Chennault Room

● Was a member of 373rd Bomb Squadron, 308th Bomb Group; am now at Lakenheath American High School, Box 3279, APO New York 09179. To my surprise, one day I noticed in our officers club here at RAF Lakenheath a room named the General Chennault Room. Apparently some of the 48th Tactical Fighter Wing commanders had served under General Chennault and decided to set up this room in honor of him. A number of interesting photos are on display here. At first I thought this wing may have served in China, but on checking I found that it was based in Europe during the war.

THOMAS J. NOCITO,
APO New York 09179

Keep 'Em Coming

● Still look forward to my copy; keep 'em coming!
W. R. SECCOMBE,
Canoga Park, Calif.

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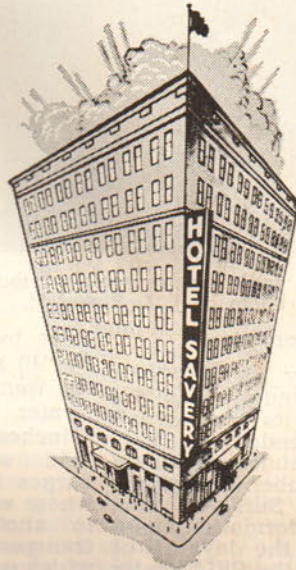
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